UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NEWS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

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CENSUS BUREAU REPORTS ON RESIDENTIAL VACANCIES AND HOMEOWNERSHIP

National vacancy rates in the fourth quarter were 9.4 percent in rental housing and 1.7 percent in homeowner housing, the Department of Commerce's Census Bureau announced today. The Census Bureau said the rental vacancy rate was higher than last year (8.8 percent), but not significantly different from last quarter (9.1 percent). The homeowner vacancy rate did not change significantly from last year (1.8 percent) or last quarter (1.7 percent).

Table 1. Rental and Homeowner Vacancy Rates for the United States: 1990 to 2002 (in percent)

| | Rental vacancy rate | | | | | Homeowner | vacancy rate | 2 |
|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Year | First Quarter | Second Quarter | Third Quarter | Fourth Quarter | First Quarter | Second Quarter | Third Quarter | Fourth Quarter |
| | | | | \downarrow | | | | \downarrow |
| 2002 | 9.1 | 8.5 | 9.1 | 9.4 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| 2001 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 8.4 | 8.8 | 1.5 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 1.8 |
| 2000 | 7.9 | 8.0 | 8.2 | 7.8 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| 1999 | 8.2 | 8.1 | 8.2 | 7.9 | 1.8 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.6 |
| 1998 | 7.7 | 8.0 | 8.2 | 7.8 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.8 |
| 1997 | 7.5 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 7.7 | 1.7 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 |
| 1996 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 8.0 | 7.7 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 1.7 |
| 1995 | 7.4 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 7.7 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.6 |
| 1994 | 7.5 | 7.4 | 7.2 | 7.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.6 |
| 1993 ^r | 7.8 | 7.6 | 7.0 | 6.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| 1993 | 7.9 | 7.6 | 7.1 | 6.9 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 1.4 |
| 1992 | 7.4 | 7.7 | 7.3 | 7.1 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.5 |
| 1991 | 7.5 | 7.3 | 7.6 | 7.3 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.6 |
| 1990 | 7.5 | 7.0 | 7.2 | 7.2 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 |

rRevised.

NOTE: The estimates in this report are based on responses from a sample of the population. As with all surveys, estimates may vary from the actual values because of sampling variation or other factors. All comparisons made in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

The data in this report are from the monthly samples of the Housing Vacancy Survey, which is a supplement to the Current Population Survey. The populations represented (the population universe) are all housing units (vacancy rates) and the civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States (homeownership rate).

For rental housing, the vacancy rates were highest outside metropolitan areas (MAs) (11.0 percent) and lowest in central cities (9.3 percent) and the suburbs (8.9 percent), though not significantly different from each other. While the rental vacancy rate in the suburbs was higher than the rate last year, no significant change occurred for other areas.

The homeowner vacancy rates were highest outside MAs (2.1 percent) and lowest in central cities (1.7 percent) and in the suburbs (1.5 percent), though not significantly different from each other. The homeowner vacancy rate in central cities was lower than the rate last year, while other areas did not change significantly.

Among regions, the rental vacancy rates were highest in the South (12.9 percent) and Midwest (10.2 percent) and lowest in the Northeast (5.6 percent) and West (7.0 percent). The rental vacancy rate in the South was higher than the rate last year, while rates in other regions were not significantly different from those shown a year ago.

The homeowner vacancy rates by region were lowest in the Northeast (1.0 percent), while rates in the other regions were not significantly different from each other. The homeowner vacancy rates in the Northeast and South (1.9 percent) were lower than last year's rates respectively, while rates in other regions showed no significant change during the same time period.

Table 2. Rental and Homeowner Vacancy Rates by Area and Region: Fourth Quarter 2002 and 2001 (in percent)

| | Rental vacancy rates | | | Homeowner vacancy rates | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Area /Region | Fourth Quarter 2002 | Fourth Quarter 2001 | Standard error on 2002 rate | Standard error on differ- ence | Fourth Quarter 2002 | Fourth Quarter 2001 | Standard error on 2002 rate | Standard error on differ- ence |
| | | | | | | | | |
| United States | 9.4 | 8.8 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Inside MAs | 9.1 | 8.4 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| In central cities | 9.3 | 9.0 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Not in central cities (suburbs) | 8.9 | 7.8 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Outside MAs | 11.0 | 10.5 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Northeast | 5.6 | 5.4 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| Midwest | 10.2 | 10.3 | 0.4 | 0.6 | 1.9 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 0.2 |
| South | 12.9 | 11.5 | 0.3 | 0.5 | 1.9 | 2.2 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| West | 7.0 | 6.6 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 1.7 | 0.1 | 0.2 |

There were an estimated 124.0 million housing units in the United States in the fourth quarter 2002. Approximately 109.0 million housing units were occupied; 74.4 million by owners and 34.6 million by renters. The number of owner-occupied units increased since last year, while the number of renter-occupied units did not change significantly. Of the 15.0 million vacant housing units, 11.5 million were for year-round use. Approximately 3.6 million of the year-round vacant units were for rent, 1.3 million were for sale only, and the remaining 6.6 million units were vacant for a variety of reasons.

Table 3. Estimates of the Total Housing Inventory for the United States: Fourth Quarter 2002 and 2001

(Estimates are in thousands and may not add to total, due to rounding)

| Туре | Fourth Quarter 2002 | Fourth Quarter 2001 | Standard error on 2002 Estimate | Standard error on difference | Percent of total (2002) |
|--|---|---|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| All housing units | 124,009 | 121,963 | 213 | 314 | 100 |
| Occupied Owner Renter | 108,999 74,418 34,581 | 107,633 73,215 34,418 | 226 229 183 | 332 335 269 | 88 60 28 |
| Vacant Year-round For rent For sale only Other | 15,010 11,531 3,638 1,308 6,585 | 14,330 10,912 3,336 1,353 6,223 | 129 114 66 40 88 | 187 165 94 59 127 | 12 9 3 1 5 |
| Seasonal | 3,479 | 3,418 | 64 | 94 | 3 |

The fourth quarter 2002 homeownership rate (68.3 percent) was not significantly different from the rate last quarter (68.0 percent) or the rate last year (68.0 percent).

Table 4. Homeownership Rates for the United States: 1980 to 2002

(in percent)

| (in percent) | T | | | | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
| Year | Homeownership Rates ¹ | | | | | |
| | First | Second | Third | Fourth | | |
| | Quarter | Quarter | Quarter | Quarter | | |
| 2002 | 67.8 | 67.6 | 68.0 | 68.3 | | |
| 2001 | 67.5 | 67.7 | 68.1 | 68.0 | | |
| | 67.1 | 67.2 | 67.7 | 67.5 | | |
| | 66.7 | 66.6 | 67.0 | 66.9 | | |
| | 65.9 | 66.0 | 66.8 | 66.4 | | |
| 1997 | 65.4 | 65.7 | 66.0 | 65.7 | | |
| | 65.1 | 65.4 | 65.6 | 65.4 | | |
| | 64.2 | 64.7 | 65.0 | 65.1 | | |
| | 63.8 | 63.8 | 64.1 | 64.2 | | |
| | 63.7 | 63.9 | 64.2 | 64.2 | | |
| 1993 | 64.2 | 64.4 | 64.7 | 64.6 | | |
| | 64.0 | 63.9 | 64.3 | 64.4 | | |
| | 63.9 | 63.9 | 64.2 | 64.2 | | |
| | 64.0 | 63.7 | 64.0 | 64.1 | | |
| | 63.9 | 63.8 | 64.1 | 63.8 | | |
| 1989 | 63.9 | 63.9 | 64.0 | 63.8 | | |
| | 63.7 | 63.7 | 64.0 | 63.8 | | |
| | 63.8 | 63.8 | 64.2 | 64.1 | | |
| | 63.6 | 63.8 | 63.8 | 63.9 | | |
| | 64.1 | 64.1 | 63.9 | 63.5 | | |
| 1984 | 64.6 | 64.6 | 64.6 | 64.1 | | |
| | 64.7 | 64.7 | 64.8 | 64.4 | | |
| | 64.8 | 64.9 | 64.9 | 64.5 | | |
| | 65.6 | 65.3 | 65.6 | 65.2 | | |
| | 65.5 | 65.5 | 65.8 | 65.5 | | |

Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates for the United States generally are 0.2 percent.

^rRevised.

Table 4SA shows the seasonally adjusted homeownership rates for the United States from 1980 to the present. (Research has shown that seasonality for homeownership rates is present.) The seasonally adjusted homeownership rate (68.2 percent) for the fourth quarter 2002, was not significantly different than the rate a year ago (68.0 percent), but was higher than the rate last quarter (67.8 percent).

Table 4SA. Homeownership Rates for the United States: 1980 to 2002

Seasonally Adjusted (in percent)

| Year | Homeownership Rates ² (Seasonally Adjusted) | | | | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|--|--|
| | First Quarter | Second Quarter | Third Quarter | Fourth Quarter | | |
| | | | | \downarrow | | |
| 2002 | 67.9 | ^r 67.8 | 67.8 | 68.2 | | |
| 2001 | 67.6 | ^r 67.9 | 67.9 | 68.0 | | |
| 2000 | 67.2 | 67.3 | 67.5 | 67.5 | | |
| 1999 | 66.8 | 66.7 | 66.8 | 66.9 | | |
| 1998 | 66.0 | 66.1 | 66.6 | 66.4 | | |
| 1997 | 65.5 | 65.8 | 65.8 | 65.7 | | |
| 1996 | 65.2 | 65.4 | 65.4 | 65.4 | | |
| 1995 | 64.4 | 64.8 | 64.8 | 65.1 | | |
| 1994 | 64.0 | 63.9 | 63.9 | 64.1 | | |
| 1993 ^r | 63.8 | 64.0 | 64.0 | 64.1 | | |
| 1993 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | | |
| 1992 | 64.1 | 64.0 | 64.1 | 64.3 | | |
| 1991 | 64.0 | 64.1 | 64.0 | 64.1 | | |
| 1990 | 64.1 | 63.9 | 63.8 | 64.0 | | |
| 1989 ^r | 64.0 | 63.9 | 63.9 | 63.7 | | |
| 1989 | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | (NA) | | |
| 1988 | 63.8 | 63.8 | 63.9 | 63.8 | | |
| 1987 | 63.9 | 63.9 | 64.1 | 64.1 | | |
| 1986 | 63.7 | 63.8 | 63.7 | 63.9 | | |
| 1985 | 64.1 | 64.1 | 63.8 | 63.6 | | |
| 1984 | 64.6 | 64.6 | 64.5 | 64.2 | | |
| 1983 | 64.7 | 64.7 | 64.6 | 64.5 | | |
| 1982 | 64.8 | 64.9 | 64.7 | 64.6 | | |
| 1981 | 65.6 | 65.4 | 65.4 | 65.3 | | |
| 1980 | 65.5 | 65.6 | 65.6 | 65.6 | | |

²Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates for the United States generally are 0.2 percent.

⁽NA) Not Applicable, only the revised series for 1989 and 1993 were used in calculating the seasonality adjustment. ^rRevised

During the fourth quarter 2002, the homeownership rate by region was highest in the Midwest (73.3 percent) and lowest in the West (62.6 percent). For the Northeast (64.9 percent), the homeownership rate was higher than the rate a year ago (64.0 percent) while the rates in other regions remained statistically unchanged for the same time period.

 $\label{thm:constraints} \mbox{Table 5. } \mbox{ \ensuremath{\textbf{Homeownership Rates for the United States and Regions:}}$

1998 to 2002 (in percent)

| | Homeownership Rates ³ | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-------|------|
| Year/Quarter | United States | Northeast | Midwest | South | West |
| | | | | | |
| 2002 | 60.2 | 54.0 | 7 2.2 | 70.0 | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.3 | 64.9 | 73.3 | 70.3 | 62.6 |
| Third Quarter | 68.0 | 64.7 | 73.2 | 69.5 | 62.8 |
| Second Quarter | 67.6 | 63.9 | 72.8 | 69.3 | 62.4 |
| First Quarter | 67.8 | 63.9 | 73.1 | 69.9 | 62.2 |
| 2001 | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.0 | 64.0 | 73.5 | 70.1 | 62.3 |
| Third Quarter | 68.1 | 64.1 | 72.9 | 70.1 | 63.1 |
| Second Quarter | 67.7 | 63.2 | 72.7 | 69.7 | 62.9 |
| First Quarter | 67.5 | 63.6 | 73.2 | 69.3 | 62.0 |
| 2000 | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 67.5 | 63.2 | 73.1 | 69.8 | 61.6 |
| Third Quarter | 67.7 | 63.9 | 72.9 | 69.7 | 62.2 |
| Second Quarter | 67.2 | 63.4 | 72.2 | 69.2 | 61.9 |
| First Quarter | 67.1 | 63.3 | 72.2 | 69.5 | 61.3 |
| 1999 | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.9 | 63.2 | 72.5 | 69.1 | 60.6 |
| Third Quarter | 67.0 | 63.6 | 72.1 | 69.3 | 60.8 |
| Second Quarter | 66.6 | 62.8 | 71.2 | 68.9 | 61.3 |
| First Quarter | 66.7 | 62.7 | 71.2 | 69.2 | 61.0 |
| 1998 | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.4 | 62.0 | 71.5 | 69.0 | 60.4 |
| Third Quarter | 66.8 | 63.4 | 71.7 | 68.8 | 61.1 |
| Second Quarter | 66.0 | 62.7 | 70.3 | 68.4 | 60.3 |
| First Quarter | 65.9 | 62.4 | 70.6 | 68.2 | 60.1 |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

³Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by region generally are 0.3 percent.

The homeownership rates by age of householder ranged from 81.5 percent for the 55 to 64 years age group to 42.0 percent for the under 35 years age group for the fourth quarter 2002. The homeownership rate for the age group 35 to 44 years (69.0 percent) was higher than last year (68.2 percent), while the rates for the other age groups did not change significantly from their respective rates a year ago.

Table 6. Homeownership Rates by Age of Householder: 1998 to 2002 (in percent)

| Year/Quarter | Homeownership Rates ⁴ | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Tour, Quarter | United States | Under 35 years | 35 to 44 years | 45 to 54 years | 55 to 64 years | 65 years and over | | |
| 2002 | | | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.3 | 42.0 | 69.0 | 76.4 | 81.5 | 80.8 | | |
| Third Quarter | 68.0 | 41.4 | 68.6 | 76.4 | 81.3 | 80.4 | | |
| Second Quarter | 67.6 | 40.8 | 68.3 | 76.3 | 80.7 | 80.1 | | |
| First Quarter | 67.8 | 41.0 | 68.6 | 76.0 | 80.8 | 80.9 | | |
| 2001 | | | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.0 | 42.2 | 68.2 | 76.2 | 81.4 | 80.7 | | |
| Third Quarter | 68.1 | 41.6 | 68.6 | 77.1 | 81.6 | 80.3 | | |
| Second Quarter | 67.7 | 40.8 | 68.1 | 77.2 | 81.5 | 79.7 | | |
| First Quarter | 67.5 | 40.4 | 68.1 | 76.5 | 80.8 | 80.7 | | |
| 2000 | | | | | | | | |
| 2000 Fourth Quarter | 67.5 | 41.2 | 68.3 | 76.4 | 80.2 | 80.4 | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 67.3 67.7 | 41.2 | 68.4 | 76.4 76.8 | 80.2 | 80.4 | | |
| Third Quarter Second Quarter | 67.2 | 40.2 | 67.5 | 76.8 76.7 | 80.3 | 80.7 | | |
| First Quarter | 67.1 | 40.2 | 67.3 | 76.7 | 80.8 | 80.3 | | |
| 1 115t Quarter | 07.1 | 40.5 | 07.5 | 70.0 | 00.0 | 00.1 | | |
| 1999 | | | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.9 | 40.3 | 67.9 | 75.2 | 81.3 | 79.6 | | |
| Third Quarter | 67.0 | 40.1 | 67.4 | 76.3 | 80.7 | 80.8 | | |
| Second Quarter | 66.6 | 39.1 | 66.5 | 76.4 | 80.8 | 80.4 | | |
| First Quarter | 66.7 | 39.4 | 67.0 | 76.2 | 81.1 | 79.8 | | |
| 1998 | | | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.4 | 39.6 | 67.6 | 74.9 | 81.7 | 79.2 | | |
| Third Quarter | 66.8 | 39.5 | 67.8 | 76.3 | 81.1 | 79.7 | | |
| Second Quarter | 66.0 | 39.3 | 66.2 | 75.5 | 80.4 | 79.2 | | |
| First Quarter | 65.9 | 39.0 | 65.9 | 75.9 | 80.3 | 79.1 | | |
| | | -2.0 | | | | | | |

⁴Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by age of householder generally are 0.4 percent.

The fourth quarter 2002 homeownership rates, when tabulated by race and ethnicity, ranged from 74.8 percent for non-Hispanic White householders to 47.5 percent for Black householders. The rates for non-Hispanic White householders (74.8 percent) and Other race householders (55.4 percent) were higher than their respective rates last year, while there were no significant changes in the other racial categories.

Table 7. Homeownership Rates by Race and Ethnicity of Householder: 1998 to 2002 (in percent)

| Year/Quarter | | | Homeowners | ship Rates ⁵ | | |
|----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | U.S. Total | White, total | White, Non- Hispanic | Black, total | Other Race, total | Hispanic ⁶ , total |
| 2002 | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.3 | 72.1 | 74.8 | 47.5 | 55.4 | 49.5 |
| Third Quarter | 68.0 | 71.9 | 74.6 | 47.1 | 54.1 | 48.3 |
| Second Quarter | 67.6 | 71.4 | 74.2 | 46.3 | 55.4 | 47.2 |
| First Quarter | 67.8 | 71.6 | 74.3 | 48.0 | 53.7 | 47.6 |
| 2001 | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.0 | 71.8 | 74.4 | 48.1 | 53.2 | 48.8 |
| Third Quarter | 68.1 | 71.9 | 74.6 | 47.5 | 54.4 | 48.1 |
| Second Quarter | 67.7 | 71.3 | 74.1 | 47.9 | 55.2 | 46.1 |
| First Quarter | 67.5 | 71.3 | 74.0 | 47.5 | 53.9 | 46.1 |
| 2000 | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 67.5 | 71.2 | 73.9 | 47.8 | 52.4 | 47.5 |
| Third Quarter | 67.7 | 71.5 | 74.3 | 46.8 | 53.9 | 46.7 |
| Second Quarter | 67.2 | 70.9 | 73.7 | 46.7 | 54.4 | 45.4 |
| First Quarter | 67.1 | 70.7 | 73.4 | 47.4 | 53.6 | 45.7 |
| 1999 | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.9 | 70.5 | 73.3 | 46.8 | 54.3 | 45.5 |
| Third Quarter | 67.0 | 70.7 | 73.5 | 46.6 | 54.5 | 45.5 |
| Second Quarter | 66.6 | 70.4 | 73.2 | 45.3 | 53.2 | 44.9 |
| First Quarter | 66.7 | 70.3 | 72.8 | 46.3 | 52.8 | 46.2 |
| 1998 | | | | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.4 | 70.1 | 72.6 | 45.9 | 52.7 | 45.7 |
| Third Quarter | 66.8 | 70.4 | 73.1 | 46.6 | 53.6 | 44.9 |
| Second Quarter | 66.0 | 69.7 | 72.5 | 44.7 | 53.5 | 43.9 |
| First Quarter | 65.9 | 69.6 | 72.1 | 45.2 | 52.3 | 44.4 |
| ~ | | | | | | |

⁵Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by race and ethnicity of householder generally are 0.2 percent for White and non-Hispanic White householders, 0.5 percent for Black householders, 0.8 percent for Other Race householders, and 0.6 percent for Hispanic householders.

⁶Hispanics may be of any race.

The homeownership rate for households with family income greater than or equal to the median family income (83.3 percent) increased since last year (82.2 percent), while the rate for households with family income less than the median family income did not change significantly during the same time period.

Table 8. Homeownership Rates by Family Income: 1998 to 2002 (in percent)

| | Homeow | nership Rates ⁷ | |
|----------------|---------------|--|--|
| Year/Quarter | United States | Households with family income greater than or equal to the median family income ⁸ | Households with family income less than the median family income |
| | | , | , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , |
| 2002 | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.3 | 83.3 | 52.4 |
| Third Quarter | 68.0 | 83.0 | 51.9 |
| Second Quarter | 67.6 | 82.3 | 51.5 |
| First Quarter | 67.8 | 82.1 | 52.3 |
| 2001 | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 68.0 | 82.2 | 53.0 |
| Third Quarter | 68.1 | 82.2 | 52.6 |
| Second Quarter | 67.7 | 82.0 | 51.7 |
| First Quarter | 67.5 | 81.7 | 51.6 |
| 2000 | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 67.5 | 81.6 | 51.8 |
| Third Quarter | 67.7 | 81.7 | 52.2 |
| Second Quarter | 67.2 | 81.8 | 50.8 |
| First Quarter | 67.1 | 81.4 | 51.4 |
| 1999 | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.9 | 81.6 | 51.2 |
| Third Quarter | 67.0 | 81.7 | 51.4 |
| Second Quarter | 66.6 | 81.5 | 50.8 |
| First Quarter | 66.7 | 81.1 | 51.2 |
| 1998 | | | |
| Fourth Quarter | 66.4 | 80.7 | 51.1 |
| Third Quarter | 66.8 | 81.6 | 51.1 |
| Second Quarter | 66.0 | 80.7 | 50.0 |
| First Quarter | 65.9 | 80.7 | 50.2 |

Standard errors for quarterly homeownership rates by family income generally are 0.2 percent.

⁸Based on families or primary individuals reporting income.

Note: This press release, along with more detailed data, is available on the Internet. Our Internet address is: www.census.gov/hhes/www/hvs.html

The estimates in this release are based on a sample survey and therefore are subject to both sampling and non-sampling error. Sampling error is a result of not surveying the entire population. Non-sampling error occurs because accurate information cannot always be obtained. The standard errors provided in the tables are primarily measures of sampling error.

Standard errors are used to: 1) measure the accuracy of estimates from a sample survey, and 2) draw inferences from the survey data. For example, the standard error on the estimated rental vacancy rate of 9.4 percent is 0.2 percentage points. Consequently, the 90-percent confidence interval as shown by these data is from 9.1 percent to 9.7 percent; i.e., the interval $9.4 \pm (1.6 \times 0.2)$ percentage points. Thus, one can say with 90-percent confidence that, were it feasible to draw all possible samples, the average rental vacancy rate would be included in this confidence interval. Statements about differences are made only when the 90-percent confidence interval indicates that a statistical difference exists.

Beginning with first quarter 2003, population controls that reflect the results of Census 2000 will be used in the CPS/HVS estimation process. As a final additional step in the process, the estimates will be controlled to independent housing counts used for the first time in order to produce a more accurate estimate of housing units. This new procedure should make the CPS/HVS estimates of housing units more consistent with other Census Bureau housing surveys. The new housing controls will affect the count of vacant units in the sense that the estimates of total occupied and vacant units will sum to the new control total. Therefore, vacancy *rates* and homeownership *rates* should not be affected by this change.

The CPS/HVS will also begin computing first-stage factors (used for weighting purposes) based on year-round and seasonal counts of housing units from Census 2000. From 1980 to 2002, the CPS/HVS first-stage factors were based on year-round estimates only. The effect on the data will likely be slight, but it should improve the counts of year-round and seasonal units.

The question on race on the CPS was modified beginning in the first quarter 2003 to comply with new standards for federal statistical agencies. Respondents may now select more than one race. The question on Hispanic or Latino origin is asked separately, and is now asked before the question on race.